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A JOINT MEMORIAL

SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF A BIPARTISAN LEGISLATIVE
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CAUCUS THAT WOULD PROVIDE A VENUE FOR
LEGISLATORS TO LEARN ABOUT IMPORTANT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES
AFFECTING NEW MEXICANS.

WHEREAS, good mental health is essential to everyone's
overall health and well-being; and

WHEREAS, mental health problems can affect all areas of
a person's life; and

WHEREAS, the United States department of health and
human services reports that mental health problems strike one
in four Americans each year regardless of age, gender, race,
ethnicity, religion or economic status; and

WHEREAS, all Americans are vulnerable to chronic mental
health problems associated with trauma and can benefit
greatly from early identification and treatment; and

WHEREAS, the United States surgeon general reports that
one-third of adults and one-half of young people with mental
health problems go without the help they need; and

WHEREAS, the national institute of mental health reports
that mental disorders are implicated in ninety percent of the
thirty thousand suicides and the six hundred fifty thousand
suicide attempts in the country each year; and

WHEREAS, the surgeon general also estimates that

1 untreated and mistreated mental illness costs American
2 business, government and taxpayers approximately eighty-three
3 billion dollars (\$83,000,000,000) annually; and

4 WHEREAS, the national association of state mental health
5 program directors research institute ranks New Mexico
6 fifty-first in the nation in per capita mental health
7 spending; and

8 WHEREAS, people with mental illness who are in recovery
9 can lead full, productive lives in the community; and

10 WHEREAS, a legislative behavioral health caucus would
11 create a venue for legislators to learn about important
12 mental health issues affecting the residents of New Mexico;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, a behavioral health caucus would provide
15 legislators an opportunity to examine the role mental health
16 plays in every community and in every sector of government,
17 including medicaid, criminal justice, education and child
18 welfare; and

19 WHEREAS, members of the behavioral health caucus would
20 send a strong message about the priority of mental health and
21 wellness and of finding solutions that bridge unmet needs,
22 improve the quality and outcomes of care and improve our
23 communities; and

24 WHEREAS, a behavioral health caucus would help ensure
25 that mental health services, including community supports,

1 are funded at appropriate levels; and

2 WHEREAS, a behavioral health caucus would contribute to
3 the knowledge of legislative committees and address issues
4 that could affect access to mental health services;

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
6 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it support the creation of a New
7 Mexico behavioral health caucus and that members of both
8 houses and all political parties be encouraged to join, or
9 become familiar with the work of, the legislative behavioral
10 health caucus; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the behavioral health caucus
12 be encouraged to work with groups such as the national
13 alliance on mental illness, the mental health association and
14 other behavioral health advocacy groups to educate the
15 legislature and the public on topics of interest regarding
16 behavioral health; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
18 transmitted to the national alliance on mental illness-New
19 Mexico.
